

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 USIE-00 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 ACDA-07 SAJ-01 OMB-01 /062 W

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FM AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1704

INFO AMCONSUL MONTREAL PRIORITY

AMCONSUL CALGARY

AMCONSUL HALIFAX

AMCONSUL QUEBEC

AMCONSUL TORONTO

AMCONSUL VANCOUVER

AMCONSUL WINNIPEG

C O N F I D E N T I A L OTTAWA 4613

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PGOV, CA

SUBJ: TURNER LEVELS STRONGEST BLAST AT TRUDEAU AND LIBERAL
GOV.

REF: TORONTO 2075

1. IN SUPPOSEDLY OFF-THE-RECORD NOV. 18 SPEECH TO TORONTO
BUSINESSMEN'S CLUB, FORMER LIBERAL MINISTER JOHN TURNER
LEVELED A STRONG ATTACK ON TRUDEAU GOV. PROGRAM. SPECIFI-
CALLY, HE CRITICIZED GOV'S HANDLING OF WAGE AND PRICE CONTROLS,
CHARGED MISMANAGEMENT OF THE ECONOMY GENERALLY, AND ATTACKED
TRUDEAU'S "NO NEGOTIATION" STANCE AGAINST THE PQ (REFTEL).

2. COMMENT. TURNER MESSAGE WAS CLEARLY DESIGNED FOR WIDE
APPEAL. ATTACKING WAGE AND PRICE CONTROLS IS ASSURED OF
A WIDE, APPRECIATIVE AUDIENCE, AND PROPOSING GREATER CON-
SULTATIONS WITH PROVINCES AND PERHAPS GREATER DEVOLUTION
OF POWER TO THEM IS A THEME WHICH APPEARS TO BE HIGHLY
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POPULAR. FINALLY, ATTACKING TRUDEAU'S "NO NEGOTIATION"

STANCE AGAINST THE PQ CONFORMS WITH GROWING FEELING
AMONG MANY HERE THAT INFLEXIBILITY MAY NOT BE THE BEST
TACTIC, IN THE FIRST INSTANCE AT LEAST.

3. WHETHER HE INTENDED TO BE OR NOT, MANY OBSERVERS REGARD
TURNER'S LATEST SPEECH AS AN INDICATION HE NOW INTENDS TO
RESUME AN ACTIVE POLITICAL ROLE AND TO CHALLENGE TRUDEAU
FOR LEADERSHIP OF LIBERAL PARTY. IT CAN BE ARGUED THAT KICKING
TRUDEAU WHEN HE IS DOWN MAY SPARK A BACKLASH AMONG LIBERALS
AGAINST TURNER, BUT TURNER, WE ASSUME, IS FULLY AWARE OF THIS
POSSIBILITY AND CONFIDENT THAT IT CAN BE AVOIDED.

MANY LIBERALS RESENTED HIS RESIGNATION AS FINANCE MIN,
BUT TURNER PRESUMABLY FEELS THAT THIS ELEMENT IS ALREADY
HOSTILE TO HIM AND THAT EVEN THEY MUST TURN TO HIM
EVENTUALLY. UNDOUBTEDLY, HE IS COUNTING ON LIBERAL
PROCLIVITY TO WIN AND TO GOVERN TO OVERCOME ANY
RESENTMENTS AGAINST HIM.

4. TURNER TOLD AMBASSADOR NOVEMBER 14 IN TORONTO THAT
BEST TACTIC FOR TRUDEAU (IN LIGHT OF EXPECTED PQ GAINS
IN NOVEMBER 15 ELECTION) WOULD BE TO REVERSE FIELD,
SAY HE HAS "HEARD THE WEST, HEARD QUEBEC" AND PROPOSE
A NEW, DECENTRALIZED MODEL OF FEDERALISM. SUCH A MANEUVER,
TURNER BELIEVES, WOULD ENABLE TRUDEAU TO
REUNITE PARTY AND COUNTRY. BUT TURNER BELIEVES THAT
TRUDEAU WILL INSTEAD WRAP HIMSELF IN THE FLAG AROUND A
HIGHLY CENTRALIZED, HIGHLY PERSONALIZED CONCEPT OF
CANADIAN UNITY, WHICH TURNER CLAIMS COULD PROVOKE
THE DISINTEGRATION OF THE COUNTRY.

5. WE ARE STILL IN THE PRELIMINARIES, BUT A DUEL
BETWEEN THE TWO MEN AND THEIR CONCEPTS OF CANADA
SEEM INEVITABLE.
ENDERS

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